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SUBJECT: SERBIA: EU-KOSOVO DIVIDE GROWS

#### Summary

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¶1. (SBU) On the eve of the first parliamentary session of 2008, a resolution proposed by the Radicals that would allow Serbia to join the EU "only with Kosovo" has deepened the rift between Serbia's ruling parties. Officials from Prime Minister Kostunica's party have said they will support the resolution while pro-EU parties have denounced the resolution and method it was produced. According to parliamentary contacts, President Tadic's party hopes to delay consideration of the text. End Summary.

#### The Proposal

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¶2. (U) On March 4, the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) submitted a draft resolution for consideration by parliament, which convenes for the first time this year on March 5. The Radicals' resolution calls on the EU not to deploy its "illegal" EULEX mission to Kosovo and calls for the "protection of Serbia's territorial integrity within international organizations." The text also asks that EU member nations which have recognized Kosovo annul those decisions and warns the EU that Serbia will "only participate in European integration with its internationally recognized borders." The document states that these positions are in accordance with the Serbian Constitution, which states that Kosovo is a part of Serbia.

#### DSS Supports

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¶3. (U) On B92 radio on March 4, DSS Vice President Milos Aligrudic said that his party would support the Radicals' resolution because it is "in accordance with state institutions, the Serbian Constitution...state Kosovo policy and previous parliamentary resolutions" on Kosovo. Also on March 4, Prime Minister Kostunica issued a statement calling on parties to "confirm a united state and national policy that Kosovo is Serbia" in parliament. Congruent with the Radicals' resolution, Kostunica said that if Serbians "truly stand behind the state and national principle that Kosovo is Serbia, then we must all support the position that Serbia can become a member of the European Union with Kosovo and Metohija." In his view, this position would "satisfy" both pro-EU parties and those "strongly insisting on the defense of Kosovo." According to Kostunica, such parliamentary action would "preserve and confirm the policy that Serbia has led for years in the defense of its essential interests, and to clearly say that Serbia is joining the European Union only with her Kosovo."

¶4. (U) Socialist Party (SPS) leader Ivica Dacic told the press that his party would support the resolution, saying that the resolution

did not prevent Serbia's EU integration but rather required the EU to "keep watch" on Serbia.

DS, G17, LDP Oppose  
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15. (U) Oliver Dulic, speaker of the parliament and Democratic Party (DS) official warned that if the DSS joined the SRS to adopt the resolution it would "represent the forming of a new parliamentary majority." DS parliamentary whip Nada Kolundzija said that her party "categorically" opposed the resolution. She said it was "unacceptable and unthinkable" that Serbian foreign policy could be made by parties outside the government. G17 Plus vice president Tomica Milosavljevic said that the resolution was made without consultation with parties within the government and would set an undesirable precedent for government activity. Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) opposed the content of the resolution most strongly. LDP Member of Parliament Ivan Andric called the resolution a "continuation of Kostunica's policies" and represented the "last moment for the DS to use its governmental majority" and oppose the DSS. Andric reiterated the LDP assessment that the "only solution" for the current divisions in government was new elections.

What's Next  
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16. (SBU) Jovan Ratkovic, adviser to President Tadic (DS), told poloff on March 4 that he had not "officially confirmed" that the DSS would vote for the resolution, and they could not do so until an hour before the parliamentary session. Dulic adviser Lidiya Vasiljevic told poloff on March 4 that there was a "strong possibility" that Kostunica will try to form a new government if this resolution was not accepted. Ratkovic and Vasiljevic both said the DS would try to stall the process "using all possible means." If the resolution passes, Ratkovic said, the DS and G17 would consider it "non binding" and would then undertake legal measures to question the legality of the resolution.

Comment  
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17. (SBU) Although this resolution would be the latest in a series of parliamentary resolutions reaffirming Serbia's Kosovo policy, the fact that this comes at a time of clear divisions within the GOS about EU integration means it represents another test of will for the ruling parties. Kostunica has elevated the importance of the resolution by effectively calling for national unity on his position that Serbia can only join the EU if united with Kosovo. The G17 and DS (to a lesser extent) have publicly opposed qualifying Serbia's European integration or linking it with Kosovo. If they are unable to prevent this resolution, binding or not, it will represent another obstacle to Serbia's European integration at the hands of Kostunica's hard-line Kosovo policy. End Comment.

MUNTER